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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/904,471	07/13/2001	Robert R. DeWitt	0412-P02404USO	8106

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EXAMINER

COSIMANO, EDWARD R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3629

DATE MAILED: 01/27/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/904,471

Applicant(s)

DEWITT ET AL.

Examiner

Edward R. Cosimano

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 October 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-49 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 19-28 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 and 29-49 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 7/13/01 & 10/21/04 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

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1. Applicant should note the changes to patent practice and procedure:

A) effective December 01, 1997 as published in the Federal Register, Vol 62, No. 197, Friday October 10, 1997;

B) effective November 07, 2000 as published in the Federal Register, Vol 65, No. 54603, September 08, 2000; and

C) Amendment in revised format, Vol. 1267 of the Official Gazette published February 25, 2003.

2. The proposed drawing corrections filed 27 June 2003 and 21 October 2004 have been approved.

2.1 It is noted that the combined set of drawings filed 13 July 2001 and 21 October 2004 are still objected to, since this set does not include the approved drawing corrections to figs. 1 & 4 as filed on 27 June 2003.

3. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

A) applicant must update:

(1) the application data in the paragraph:

(a) between page 29, line 13 and page 30, line 4, "Although the computer ... U.S. Application No. 09/816,687 ... application No. 09/816,687 ... reader 80 and labeler 95.", see the corrections in appendix A; and

(b) between page 35, line 8, and page 36, line 4, "If the computer ... No. 09/816,687 ... piece cannot be determined.", see the corrections in appendix A;

with the current status of each of the referenced applications, e.g., --now abandoned--, or --now patent #?--, or --which is abandoned and now serial number #?--, etc.

B) the following errors have been noted in the specification:

(1) as can be seen in figs. 1-4 & 9 and from the context of the paragraph at page 9, lines 8-17, "As mentioned above, conveyor 22 ... conveyor motor 27 ... conveyor motor 22. More ... feed sensor 24 described above.", at line 7 of

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this paragraph as amended June 27, 2003 the reference to "conveyor motor 22" should be -conveyor motor 27--.

Appropriate correction is required.

4. The specification and drawings have not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors. Applicant's cooperation is requested in correcting any errors of which applicant may become aware in the specification or drawings. Applicant should note the requirements of 37 CFR § 1.52, 37 CFR § 1.74, § 1.75, § 1.84(o,p(5)), § 1.121(a)-1.121(f) & § 1.121(h)-1.121(i).

5. Claims 1-18 & 29-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

5.1 In regard to claims 1-18 & 29-49, although on of ordinary skill at the time of the invention would known how to accomplish each of the individual recited actions/functions from the language of these claims, since, there is no clear and definite interconnection between one or more of the recited limitations of these claims, one of ordinary skill could not determine from the language of these claims whether or not they are in fact making and/or using the claimed invention. In this regard it is noted that from the language of these claims it is vague, indefinite and unclear:

A) in regard to claims 1, 31 & 42, and how the "scale" may weigh pieces of mail, since the phrase "positioned along the transport path" does not require the scale to be in the "transport path", so that the piece of mail are physically in a position on the scale so that the weight of the piece of mail may be determined.

B) in regard to claims 1, 13, 31 & 42, and why either an "imaging station" or "scanner" is used to scan the mail or the piece is scanned so as to determine the recipient's address", since the invention as recited in this claim does not use either the scanned image or the recipient's address.

C) in regard to claims 1, 31 & 42 and whether the label as applied by the labeler to the mail is in fact the same label that has the postage printed on it, since the

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invention as recite in these claims does not require the printed label to be the label that is applying to be the label that is applied to the piece of mail.

D) in regard to claims 1, 13, 31, 42 & 49 and how the “determined postage” may be printed on a label”, since the invention as recited in this claim does not require the either the processor, (claim 1, lines 8-9) or anything else to either control a printer or to communicate the determined postage to a printer so that the printer may print the determined postage.

E) in regard to claims 2, 14, 32 & 46, and how the processor or anything else may determine “the postage in response to the determined recipient’s address”, since the invention as recited in this claim does not require the processor or anything else to be connected to either the “imaging station” or “scanner” so that the process may receive an indication of the “determined recipient’s address”.

F) in regard to claims 3, 34 & 44 and how either the “imaging station” or “scanner” may determine the recipient’s address from a series of discrete scan lines, since:

(1) none of the scan lines would contain enough information so that the recipient’s address may determined; and

(2) the invention as recited in the claim does not require that the “recipient’s address be with in the scanned portion of the piece of mail.

G) in regard to claims 5 & 36, and how and where the piece is rejected, since the system of base claim does not have a means to permit an item of mail to be rejected so that it is not processed by the mail processing system of the base claim.

H) in regard to claims 6, 7, 15, 16, 29-31, 33, 44, 45, 47 & 48, and how the mail may be sorted according to the “characteristics of each piece” (claim 6) or the “determined recipient’s address” (claims 7, 16 & 47) or under unknown conditions (claim 15), or the weight (claims 29-31, 44, 45 & 48), since the invention as recited in this claim does not:

(1) determined the characteristics of each piece so that a “sorter” may be controlled based on the determined characteristics;

(2) require a sorter to receive an indication from either the “imaging station” or the “scanner” of the “determined recipient’s address” so that the sorter may be controlled in response to the “determined recipient’s address”;

(3) require the sorter to receive and use any type of data/information that is to be used to determine which bin is to receive the piece; and

(4) require a sorter to receive an indication from the “scale” of the “weight of the piece” so that the sorter may be controlled in response to the “determined weight”.

I) in regard to claims 8 & 37, and why a “reject bin” to receive “pieces for which the recipient’s address is not determined” is included, since the invention as recited in this claim does not require either a means or a sorter which receives an indication from the “imaging station” of whether or not the “recipient’s address” has not been determined so that either the means or the sorter may be controlled in response to an undetermined “recipient’s address”.

J) in regard to claims 9 & 38, and how a “re-orientor” may be operable to re-orientate the mail, since the invention as recited in this claim does not require either a means or a sensor to determine whether or not the piece of mail is properly orientated so that it may be re-orientated as necessary.

K) in regard to claims 11, 12, 17, 40 & 41, and where the “verifier” is located, when the “verifier” would perform the recited function, and how it may determine if the postage has been properly printed, since the invention as recited in this claim does not require either that:

(1) the label that has a postage printed on it to be applied to a piece of mail; or

(2) the invention contain or use the information/data that would be necessary to determine what would be considered as a “properly printing postage value”; or

(3) the invention use a means to recognize the characters contained within the combined image; or

(4) that the combined image actually contain the printed postage value.

L) in regard to claims 13, 45 & 48 and how the piece is weighed, since the invention as recited in this claim does not require the recited scale to be used to perform this function.

M) in regard to claims 13, 45 & 48, and what determines the "appropriate postage based on the determined weight" of the piece, since the invention as recited in this claim does not require anything or anyone to receive an indication of the weight from any device so that it may be used to determine the appropriate postage.

N) in regard to claim 18 and to where the feeder serially feeds piece of mail, since the invention as recited in the base claim does not require the piece of mail to be either feed or transported.

5.2 Since claim 31 lacks a recitation of either "an imaging station" (claims 34 & 35), applicant's reference to this phrase lack antecedent basis in the base claim.

5.3 Claims not specifically mentioned above, inherit the defects of the base claim through dependency. For the above reason(s), applicant has failed to particularly point out what is regarded as the invention.

6. 35 U.S.C. § 101 reads as follows:

"Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefore, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title".

6.1 Claims 1-18 & 29-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the invention as claimed is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

6.1.1 As set forth by the Court in:

A) In re Musgrave 167 USPQ 280 at 289-290 (CCPA 1970), "We cannot agree with the Board that these claims (all the steps of which can be carried out by the disclosed apparatus) are directed to non-statutory processes merely because some or all of the steps therein can also be carried out in or with the aid of the human mind or because it may be necessary for one performing the process to think. All that is necessary, in our view, to make a sequence of

operational steps a statutory “process” within 35 U.S.C. 101 is that it be in the technological arts so as to be in consonance with the Constitutional purpose to promote the progress of “useful arts.” Cons. Art. 1, sec. 8.”, {emphasis added}; and

B) In re Sarkar 100 USPQ 132 @ 136-137 (CCPA 1978), echoing the Board of Appeals stated in regard to claim 14 “14. A method of locating an obstruction in an open channel to affect flow in a predetermined manner comprising:

a) obtaining the dimensions of said obstruction which affect the parameters of flow;

b) constructing a mathematical model of at least that portion of the open channel in which said obstruction is to be located in accordance with the method of claim 1 using those dimensions obtained in step (a) above;

c) adjusting the location of said obstruction within said mathematical model until the desired effect upon flow is obtained in said model; and thereafter

d) constructing said obstruction within the actual open channel at the specified adjusted location indicated by the mathematical model.”;

and “Concerning claims 14-39 and the significance of “post-solution activity,” like building a bridge or dam, the board concluded: While it is true that the final step in each of these claims makes reference to the mathematical result achieved by performing the prior recited steps, we consider the connection to be so tenuous that the several steps recited in each claim when considered as a whole do not constitute a proper method under the statute.”, {emphasis added}.

6.1.2 Further, it is noted in regard to claims 14-39 of Sarkar, although step (d) of claim 14 of Sarkar references the result of step (c) of claim 14 of Sarkar it is clear from the language of step (c) of claim 14 of Sarkar that multiple adjustments to the location of the obstruction are required to be made until a location with the desired effect has been determined. Hence, the

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reference to constructing the obstruction at the "specified adjusted location" in step (d) of claim 14 of Sarkar is vague, indefinite and unclear in regard to which one of the possible multiple adjusted locations of the obstruction that were used during step (c) of claim 14 of Sarkar would be used when constructing the obstruction as required by step (d) of Sarkar. Therefore, without a clear connection between step (d) of Sarkar and the remaining steps of claim 14 of Sarkar, the Board of Appeals and the Court held that these claims were not a process within the meaning of process as used in 35 U.S.C. § 101 and hence were directed to non statutory subject matter.

6.1.3 As can be seen from claims 1-18 & 29-49, these claims are directed to a series of devices for performing various functions or steps/actions/functions, which as set forth above in regard to the rejection of claims 1-18 & 29-49 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 2nd paragraph, are not clearly and definitely interconnected to one another and therefore do not provide an operative useful machine/system or method/process within the meaning of machine or process as used in 35 U.S.C. § 101.

6.2 Claims 1-18 & 29-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the invention as claimed is directed to non-statutory subject matter, since:

A) in regard to claims 1-18 & 29-49, these claims fail to comply with the "requirements this title, namely 35 U.S.C. § 112 2nd paragraph as set forth above.

B) in regard to claims 1-18 & 29-49, these claims fail to comply with the "requirements this title, namely 35 U.S.C. § 102 as set forth below.

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. § 103 which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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(c) Subject matter developed by another person, which qualifies as prior art only under subsection (f) or (g) of section 102 of this title, shall not preclude patentability under this section where the subject matter and the claimed invention were, at the time the invention was made, owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person.

7.1 Claims 1, 2, 6-8, 10, 11, 13-18, 29-37 & 39-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sansone et al (5,008,827) in view of Sansone et al (5,925,864) as evidenced and interpreted in view of Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, Kolisch (2,689,082) and Uno et al (5,535,127).

7.1.1 In regard to claims 1, 2, 6-8, 10, 11, 13-18, 29-37 & 39-49, Sansone et al ('827) discloses a mail processing system that includes the following elements:

A) a conveyor system for transporting the items of mail through the mail processing system (note mail path 78);

B) a scale 88 for weight the item of mail as the mail is conveyed through the mail processing system;

C) a scanner 84, for scanning the preprinted information on an item of mail, that is address information, as the mail is conveyed through the mail processing system;

D) a labeler/printer 92, for applying information to the items of mail as the mail is conveyed through the mail processing system;

E) a processor 60 which controls the operation of the system and determines the correct amount of postage for the item of mail based on the destination address and weight as well as post office discount requirements; and

F) a postage meter 90 for applying the correct amount of postage to the item of mail as the mail is conveyed through the mail processing system.

7.1.2 In regard to the claimed use of labels, Sansone et al ('827) disclose printing the information on a label which is then applied to the item of mail, however, as clearly taught by Sansone et al ('864) the labeler/printer of the mail processing system may apply the information to the items of mail by printing the information either:

A) directly to the item of mail, or

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B) directly on a label that is applied to the item of mail, as the mail is conveyed through the mail processing system. Hence, from the teachings of Sansone et al ('864) the printing of the information by either method of:

A) directly to the item of mail, or

B) directly on a label that is applied to the item of mail, is functionally equivalent to the other method of applying information to items of mail. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made that the mail processing systems of Sansone et al ('827) could be modified to apply information to a label that will be applied to an item mail as taught by Sansone et al ('864). Further, this combination would be within the level of ordinary skill at the time of the invention, since one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention was made would have readily recognized that either method of applying information to an item of mail as taught by Sansone et al ('864) or the certification of Sansone et al ('827) as labeling because as defined in Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (Merriam-Webster Inc., Publishers Springfield, Massachusetts ©1986) the act of labeling includes "3 ... b: written or printed matter accompanying an article to furnish identification or other information".

7.1.3 In regard to using the scanned information and weight to determine the correct postage amount, it is noted that as taught by Kolisch ('082) in 1954 the amount of postage required for an item of mail is based on at least the weight and destination with respect to the origin of the item of mail. Hence, in view of the information required for determining the correct amount of postage as understood by one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made as evidenced by Kolisch ('082), it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made that the mail processing systems of Sansone et al ('827) as modified by Sansone et al ('864) would consider both the weight and destination of an item of mail relative to the origin of the mail when determining the correct amount of postage for the item of mail.

7.1.4 In regard to claims 3-5, 12, 34-36 & 41, Sansone et al ('827) does not describe in detail the operation of ocr device 84, however as taught by Uno et al ('127) in 1996, an ocr scanner would build an image of a moving object by combining a number of individual scans of the object to build an image of the object and then processes the image to identify the information

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contained in the image. Since the ocr device of Sansone et al ('827) as modified by Sansone et al ('864) is required to obtain and process an image of a moving item as does the image processing device of Uno et al ('127), it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made that the mail processing systems of Sansone et al ('827) as modified by Sansone et al ('864) use ocr device 84 to obtain an image of the item of mail and hence the address information as taught by Uno et al ('127).

7.1.5 In regard to the sorting function of claims 5-8 & 36-37, note that some of the processed mail may be rejected for any number of reasons while the remaining items of processed mail would be sent to the Postal system for delivery processing by the Postal system.

7.2 Claims 9 & 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sansone et al (5,008,827) in view of Sansone et al (5,925,864) as evidenced and interpreted in view of Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, Kolosch (2,689,082) and Uno et al (5,535,127) as applied above to claims 1, 2, 6-8, 10, 11, 13-18, 29-37 & 39-49 and further in view of York et al (5,926,392).

7.2.1 In regard to claims 9 & 38, the combination of Sansone et al ('827) as modified by Sansone et al ('864) does not disclose re-orientating the item of mail during the processing, however, York et al ('392) discloses that in mail processing systems it is sometimes necessary to re-orientate item of mail so that the item of mail may be processed by the mail processing system. Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made that the mail processing systems of either Connell et al ('228 or '124) or Sansone et al ('827) or Metelits et al ('306) or Uno et al ('127) or Gil et al ('514) could be modified to include the use of an re-orientation means so that the items of mail may be properly processed as taught by York et al ('392).

8. Response to applicant's arguments.

8.1 All rejections and objections of the previous Office action not repeated or modified and repeated here in have been over come by applicant's last response.

8.2 As per the objections to the drawings and disclosure, since applicant either failed to address or correct the noted defects, these objection have been maintained.

8.3 As per the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection, since:

A) applicant has not argued the rejection of the pending claims as set forth in the Office action mailed 16 April 2004, applicant's argument's are non persuasive.

B) in regard to the labeler being used, since the claims fail to recite any feature of the labeler other than it's function that would distinguish the claimed labeler over any other labeler, applicant's argument's are non persuasive.

C) it is noted that whether the indicia information is printed on the label and then the label is applied or a blank label is applied then the indicia is printed on the applied label, the end result is the same, hence the Court has stated it is not invention to merely move the location of a device, since the new position does not affect, i.e. modify the operation of the device, (In re Japikse, 86 U.S.P.Q. 70 @ 73 (CCPA, 1950)). Therefore, applicant's argument's are non persuasive.

9. The examiner has cited prior art of interest, for example:

A) Tamada (4,641,753) which disclose the use of image scanners and image processing to aid in the sorting of mail into a number of bins.

B) Kara (5,822,739) which discloses that either the return or recipient address information may be included in the postage indicia applied to an item of mail.

C) Pintsov (6,125,357) which discloses that selected portions of the recipient address information is encrypted and included in the postage indicia applied to an item of mail.

10. The shorten statutory period of response is set to expire 3 (three) months from the mailing date of this Office action.

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11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Edward Cosimano whose telephone number is (703) 305-9783. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Thursday from 7:30am to 6:00pm. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Weiss, can be reached on (703)-308-2702. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1113.

11.1 The fax phone number for UNOFFICIAL/DRAFT FAXES is (703) 746-7240.

11.2 The fax phone number for OFFICIAL FAXES is (703) 872-9306.

11.3 The fax phone number for AFTER FINAL FAXES is (703) 872-9306.

01/16/05


Edward R. Cosimano
Primary Examiner A.U. 3629

APPENDIX A: PROPOSED CHANGES TO SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph located at page 9, lines 8-17, as follows:

As mentioned above, the timing belt 39 drives the pusher 30 forwardly toward the feeder 40. The feed rate of the pusher 30 can be matched to the conveyor 22 so that the pusher and the conveyor feed the mail together at the same rate. For instance, the timing belt 39 may be interconnected with the conveyor motor 27 so that the motor drives both the pusher and the conveyor. Alternatively, and preferably, the pusher 30 is driven by a separate motor 37 (see Fig. 9) that is controlled independently of the conveyor motor ~~[[22]]~~ 27. More specifically, preferably the pusher 30 operates in response to a pusher feed sensor 38 that is configured similarly to the conveyor feed sensor 24 described above.

Please amend the paragraph located between page 29, line 13 and page 30, line 4, as follows:

Although the computer has time to process the image data and determine the address for a piece while the piece is being weighed, that time delay may not be sufficient to determine the address. Since in the preferred mode the postage label cannot be applied until the postage is determined, it may be necessary to buffer the piece while the computer determines the address, so that the computer can determine the proper postage. Several methods of efficiently buffering pieces while a computer reads the addresses are disclosed in co-pending U.S. Application No. 09/816,687 filed March 23, 2001, now U. S. Patent No. 6,613,998 which is hereby incorporated herein by reference. One of the methods disclosed in application No. 09/816,687 now U. S. Patent No. 6,613,998 can be incorporated into the present system between the reader 80 and the labeler 95.

Please amend the paragraph located between page 35, line 8, and page 36, line 4, as follows:

If the computer does not determine the proper postage for an envelope prior to the pre-determined time necessary to print and apply a label, a postage label is not applied. The piece may be outsorted without a label, however, preferably a label is printed with a unique code and applied to the piece for use during reject processing. The system controller 15 and computer 16 then electronically tag the piece to correlate the image data and the unique code for the piece.

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The piece is then sorted separately from the mail for which the addresses were determined. For instance, if the address for a piece of mail cannot be determined using OCR, the image for the piece may be exported, and then, using local or remote video encoding, an operator can manually key in the address, which is then correlated with the unique code number associated with the piece. During subsequent processing, the address is determined simply by scanning the unique code. Co-pending United States application No. 09/816,687 filed March 23, 2001, now U. S. Patent No. 6,613,998 describes the details of such a system for printing a unique code on a piece, or applying a label with a unique code onto the piece, if the address on the piece cannot be determined.

US-PAT-NO: 4641753

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 4641753 A

TITLE: Mail sorting apparatus

DATE-ISSUED: February 10, 1987

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
Tamada; Masuo	Yokohama	N/A	N/A	JP

US-CL-CURRENT: 209/546, 209/584 , 209/900 , 382/101 , 700/224

ABSTRACT: An apparatus for sorting mail is disclosed. In the apparatus, a readout section reads out destination data on mail. A discriminating section discriminates the destination data on the basis of the result of readout by the readout section. A plurality of coding desks each include a display section for displaying the readout result by the readout section when the discriminating section fails to discriminate the destination data, and a keyboard for enabling the destination data corresponding to the contents of display by the display section to be input. The plurality of coding desks are assigned to regions or cities. A distributing section distributes the readout result by the readout section to coding desks corresponding to regions or cities as recognized from part of the address data when the discriminating section fails to discriminate the destination data. A sorting data assigning section assigns to the mail the sorting data according to the result of discriminating operation by the discriminating section or the destination data by the keyboards of the coding desks. A sorting/collecting section sorts and collects the mail into predetermined sorting sections according to the sorting data applied by the sorting data assigning section.

3 Claims, 8 Drawing figures

Exemplary Claim Number: 1

Number of Drawing Sheets: 5

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Detailed Description Text - DETX (9): The read/sorter 13 will be described in FIGS. 3 and 4. The read/sorter 13 is composed of an image reader 41, a control unit 42, a delay/print section 43, and a sorting section 45. The image reader 41 converts optical destination information, or address information, on a mail P into electrical image information, and contains an optical character reader and an image pickup. The control unit 42 is coupled with a discriminator 91 (FIG. 6) for discriminating the address information from the image information read by the image reader 41 (see FIGS. 1 and 6). The delay/print section 43 delays the incoming mail P from the image reader 41, and prints on the mail P a bar code (sorting data) according to the discrimination result by the discriminator 91 and the address information encoded by the video coding desks 8.sub.1, 8.sub.2, . . . The sorting section 45 sorts the mail according to the bar codes printed thereon and distributes them into sorting boxes 44.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (10): The image reader 41 and the delay/print section 43 are arranged as shown in FIG. 3. The mail P fed from a feed section 51 or the mail P transferred from the coupler 12 is transferred on a transfer path 52. An

image reader 58 reads the information on the mail P transferred on the transfer path 52 by the optical scanner. The mail P passed through the image reader 58 is supplied through a transfer path 53 and a delay/transfer path 54 to the sorting section 45 (FIG. 4). On the terminal portion of the delay/transfer path 54, a printer 55 and stackers 56 and 57 are disposed. The printer 55 prints on the mail P a bar code representing the address information.

US-PAT-NO: 5822739

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 5822739 A

TITLE: System and method for remote postage metering

DATE-ISSUED: October 13, 1998

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
Kara; Salim G.	Houston	TX	N/A	N/A

US-CL-CURRENT: 705/410, 235/375 , 235/381 , 705/401

ABSTRACT: A system and method for remote postage metering of postage indicia, including demanding a desired postage amount and subsequently printing the postage indicia onto a piece of mail. A user inputs certain necessary information, as well as additional desired information, into a local processor-based system. The local system then assembles a postage demand in suitable format and transmits the same to a remote postage metering device. The remote postage metering device then verifies the demand for authority to demand and valid funding. Upon verification, the remote postage meter assembles a data packet representing an authorized postage indicia. The data packet is transmitted to the local system for printing. Printing of the postage indicia may be unaccompanied, or may include additional information. Such additional information may include destination and return address, machine readable routing or identification information, or a complete document to be posted.

63 Claims, 3 Drawing figures

Exemplary Claim Number: 1

Number of Drawing Sheets: 3

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Detailed Description Text - DETX (13): At step 203 the Demand program accepts the postal item sender's return address. As indicated in step 203, the return address may be communicated to the Demand program automatically if the Demand program is coupled with another process, such as a word processing program. Furthermore, the return address information may be utilized by the Demand program to later print the return address along with the postage indicia on a postal item. If determined to be advantageous, such as, for example, if required by a postal authority, the return address information may also be transmitted to the remote postage metering system for inclusion in a generated data packet or for validation of the postage demand. The return address information can also be encoded within a generated postage indicia in such a way as to be machine readable and thus suitable for utilization in preventing postal fraud.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (40): Destruction of the data packet is advantageous in discouraging postal fraud, but is not required by the present invention. As discussed above, the postage indicia itself may include machine readable information to aid in the detection of postal fraud. Such information may include return address, destination address, date, time, or unique information such as the Demand program serial number or a transaction number. This machine readable information could be utilized by the postal service to detect postal fraud by such indicators as destination address on the postal item and encoded within the postage indicia not matching.

US-PAT-NO: 6125357

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6125357 A

TITLE: Digital postal indicia employing machine and human verification

DATE-ISSUED: September 26, 2000

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
Pintsov; Leon A.	West Hartford	CT	N/A	N/A

US-CL-CURRENT: 705/408, 380/51 , 380/55 , 705/410 , 705/62

ABSTRACT: The present invention is a method of encrypting unique addressee information into the indicium of a mail piece and verifying the indicium. Local digital tokens are printed in the indicium of the mail piece and point to pivotal address characters in the addressee block. The pivotal address characters are also printed in the indicium. Additionally, a global digital token is included in the indicium.

13 Claims, 5 Drawing figures

Exemplary Claim Number: 1

Number of Drawing Sheets: 4

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Abstract Text - ABTX (1): The present invention is a method of encrypting unique addressee information into the indicium of a mail piece and verifying the indicium. Local digital tokens are printed in the indicium of the mail piece and point to pivotal address characters in the addressee block. The pivotal address characters are also printed in the indicium. Additionally, a global digital token is included in the indicium.